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RESTRICTED

19 May 1948

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To : Executive for DS

From : Assistant Director for Operations

Subject: Draft of Informal Interdepartmental Working Agreement for the
Downgrading, Releasing, and Publishing of Information from
Captured German Documents or Reproductions thereof.

1. It is the opinion of this Office that the words "the Central Intelligence Agency" should be inserted between the words "National Military Establishment" and "the Secretary of State" each time this phrase occurs in Paragraph 2 of subject draft.

2. Although the Central Intelligence Agency does not have custody of a large quantity of German documents, it has assumed responsibility for the exploitation for intelligence purposes of the extensive collections held by the Departments of the Army and Navy. It has, therefore, a definite interest in the downgrading, upgrading, or maintenance of the classification on certain German documents and translations thereof. If a government agency wishes to declassify a document in its custody which has intelligence value or "is considered to contain information of interest" to the Central Intelligence Agency, this agency should be consulted prior to declassification and release of the document for private research or general publication.

3. Concur in proposed draft, subject to the addition noted above, and concur strongly in the principle that the agency having custody of captured documents has primary responsibility for declassification of same.

4. Suggest that the terms of reference of this draft should be, if possible, extended to include captured Japanese documents, since the Joint Chiefs of Staff originally had jurisdiction over all documents captured by U.S. military forces in the European and Far Eastern theaters, and no clear declassification directives have been issued with respect to Far Eastern documents. Hitherto CIA has followed the general procedures laid down by the report of the Japanese Document Conference issued by the War Department on 15 January 1945. This report specified, however, "that the Joint Security Control be charged with responsibility for preparing security procedures for all agencies and services which deal with captured documents outside the jurisdiction of the theaters", and no such procedures are known to have been formulated by the Joint Security Control. Alteration of the proposed draft of the "Interdepartmental Working Agreement" to include Japanese as well as German documents would be of direct assistance to CIA, since this agency still has custody of a large number of Japanese documents. Foreign Documents Branch, OO, is responsible, therefore, for the correct classification of

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these documents, and consequently receives frequent requests for declassification of material under its control, but lacks an adequate directive on the subject from a higher authority.

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Encl.
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